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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6853
INFO RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PRIORITY
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE

UNCLAS KINSHASA 001085

SIPDIS

SIPDIS, SENSITIVE

HHS PASS TO CDC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [SENV](#) [TBIO](#) [PGOV](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: EBOLA OUTBREAK IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

REF: KINSHASA 01075

1. (SBU) Summary. Ebola virus, one of the hemorrhagic fevers, was confirmed on September 10 in the province of West Kasai, where nearly 400 people have fallen ill and over 160 of those have died since June (ref Kinshasa 1075). DRC Minister of Health, Makwenge Kaput, received the results from a World Health Organization (WHO) laboratory in Gabon and from the CDC in Atlanta and announced the news on national television that evening. Experts from WHO and CDC are traveling to the DRC to support local authorities and expatriate personnel already in country. A revised warden message has been drafted warning Americans of this deadly outbreak. End summary.

It's Confirmed: Ebola

2. (SBU) Lab results from samples collected during the week of September 3 (ref Kinshasa 1075) and sent to laboratories outside of the DRC confirm that the disease that has killed over 160 of the nearly 400 suspected cases in the DRC is Ebola virus, one of the hemorrhagic fevers. The virus began claiming victims in June, following the death of a village chief in a cluster of villages located between the towns of Mwaka and Luebo in Kasai Occidental (West Kasai) province of south-central DRC. GDRC Minister of Health, Makwenge Kaput, appeared on national television on Monday evening and made an official declaration of the epidemic. He will fly to the provincial capital of West Kasai, Kananga, on Wednesday.

Full Geographic Spread not Known

3. (SBU) The disease has now spread from an initial seven villages to both Mwaka and Luebo, covering an area with a radius of 40 miles. (Note: The full geographic parameters of the outbreak are still not known for certain. A suspected case in Kananga was proven not/not to be Ebola. End note.) An estimated 140,000 people live in the area of Mwaka, some 43 miles from the initial outbreak, and four fatalities there were attributed to the disease before August 28. Mwaka is on the main rail line between Kananga and Ilebo the river port connected to Kinshasa by boat traffic on the Kasai River. The last known outbreak of Ebola virus in the DRC was in 1995 in Kikwit, Bandundu province, 300 kms (185 miles) due east of Mwaka, when 245 people died.

Local and International Response

4. (SBU) The GDRC Ministry of Health has already held several meetings under the leadership of the minister. Provincial authorities have organized an emergency response team. WHO is sending two experts in viral hemorrhagic fevers to the DRC. CDC

epidemiologist Peter Kilmarx, with prior experience in the DRC, is en route to Kinshasa. Additional CDC assistance, pending a formal invitation from the GDRC, is being organized. Because of proximity to the Angolan border (250 kms, 155 miles) CDC Luanda is keeping the GOA informed of developments. Kilmarx and CDC Kinshasa-based epidemiologist Luca Flamigni will likely travel to West Kasai on Thursday.

Updated Warden Message

15. A consular warden message alerting the American public in the DRC to this epidemic and advising stringent personal health precautions has been drafted and is being posted on the Embassy's website as well as transmitted through the traditional warden message system.

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